

Third Ward To Main Street Connectivity Project

Old Spanish Trail Public Meeting No. 1 Minutes

The Third Ward Redevelopment Council (TWRC) and the City of Houston's Planning and Development Department held the first of three public meetings in the Third Ward the week of August 26th, 2002. The purpose of the meetings was to solicit public input on the design of street improvements, landscaping and other amenities to Blodgett, Elgin and OST/Alameda Streets from Scott Street to Main Street. Residents, business owners and other stakeholders along OST met with representatives of the TWRC, OST/Alameda TIRZ, the City of Houston's Planning and Development Department and the consultant team, led by M2L Associates, Inc on Tuesday, August 27th at St. Peter's Catholic Church to identify issues and opportunities in the corridor. This input will be used to generate ideas for improving the image and function of OST. These design concepts will be presented to the stakeholders in late September for review and comments.

AGENDA ITEMS

- I. Consultants presented background of the project and scope of work.
- II. Participants divided into four facilitated, breakout sessions.
- III. Each group was asked to look at three factors within their neighborhoods: 1) the strengths of the corridor; 2) corridor weaknesses; and 3) the potential opportunities and future vision of the corridor.
- IV. Participants presented findings and consultant team presented concluding remarks.

The following information represents the outcome of the discussion group session sorted by aesthetics/perception, safety, infrastructure, transportation, and potential improvements*:

*(Note: number in parentheses indicates the number of times this item was generated)

AESTHETICS/PERCEPTION (*Visible improvements and overall impression of corridor*)

Strengths

- Historically strong community (2)
- Serves as a gateway to the Third Ward Community (2)
- Good housing
- Good community partnership

Weaknesses

- Not enough services and retail (3)
- Vacant land and unattractive buildings (2)
- Duplication of businesses, little variety
- Too many low quality motels
- Cluttered above ground utilities
- Lack of consistent theme

SAFETY (*Unsafe conditions relating to pedestrian and automobile uses and functions*)

Strengths

- Low traffic volume
- Good signalization

Weaknesses

- Automobiles crossing medians

INFRASTRUCTURE (*Roadway widths, utilities, traffic signals, etc.*)

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Strengths

- Access to walking trail at Macgregor
- Good lighting

Weaknesses

- Sidewalks and ramp are not adequate and in poor condition (2)
- Street flooding at Scott and OST (2)
- Poor landscaping and lack of maintenance (2)
- Poor Graphics and limited way finding systems
- No transition between property and right-of-way

TRANSPORTATION (*Automobile circulation, mass transit.*)

Strengths

- Good location for businesses and residential property (2)
- Good traffic capacity
- Good east and west connection
- Very accessible to freeway
- Adequate public transportation

Weaknesses

- Not enough parking at bus stops
- Unattractive bus shelters
- Potential traffic at new apartment complex

POTENTIAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS (*Design ideas for improving the corridor*)

- Gateway/monument to identify the community (2)
- Create a friendly pedestrian environment (2)
- Increase the quality and quantity of street lights (2)
- More pedestrian movement with better streetscape design (2)
- Continuity of streetscape design
- Improve ugly, abandoned properties and buildings
- Create attractive area for commercial and pedestrian uses
- OST theme
- Signage to identify the historic sites, perhaps an area map.
- Quality street furniture
- Improve parking to have a better access to business
- Accommodate and control large vehicular traffic
- Better looking bus shelters and more of them.